11/18/66

Dear Mr. Price,

Your encouraging letters mean much to me. Thanks for taking the time. If it seems as though I am ignoring your advice, which is good advice, it is not by intent.

When I didn't hear from you, I assumed either you or your lawyer were not available. By chance another opportunity afforded itself and I took it, giving the copy I had for you to this lawyer, who happens to be experienced in publishing law. He likes and is impressed with the book. I expect to be hearing from him again soon.

One thing he finds not libelous but cautions me about is deliberate and is entirely opposed to your advice. I call Arlen Specter a liar. Further, I acknowledge that if this is untrue it is actionable. I then prove beyond any doubt that he is a liar, with his own word and from the official evidence. Now the possibility exists that he will accept my challenge and sue. Wesley Liebeler hasn't and will not, except in desperation. For the thing I want is the thing they least want, to get any aspect of this into a court of law.

I have no doubt that if and when anyone sues me there are many wonderful and dedicated lawyers (aside from our silent friend Joel Steinberg, whose study of who really owned the autopsy documents I wish I had had two weeks ago, for I was ahead of everybody, as you see) will come forward and help.

What was cut was hot. Most of it was me. Most of it was a piece-by-piece shredding of Cohen (with a little of Lane and Bishop minced in). From the version shown here, what preceded and followed my calling Cohen a liar was edited out. So was the cause of my anger. I was legitimately angry in reality, but not on the taped version. I warned Cohen the night before what I'd do if he insisted on falsifying. I just called my shot. The editing was to favor him and Lane and I have learned to live with this. Lane tried to make little of the destruction of evidence (some lawyer-some counsel for the defense!) and finally said "what difference does it make"? Part of my answer is in, on the pictures. But then that crook stole my lines without interference from the moderator. I could do nothing without seeming a sourhead. I'll tangle with him yet, and when I do, it will be just the two of us....I've demanded a spot on the majority report they are doing, invoking the Cohen precedent and their invitation to the Commission side for this show. That will be it!

Perhaps I can make you understand what I do not fully understand myself. When I get in one of these things something takes control of me. It is as though I cannot exercise conscious thought, although I do. But when the steam is up I just blow and in so doing I find an eloquence I do not normally possess. It is as though some spirit has taken possession of me for this purpose. Much of what I do is done before I realize it. Often there is, in reality, little time for thought. In any event, Cohen's position is not the usual one. First there is the rumor of his CIA connections (he should have lost his job, should he not?) and then to me he represents those whose abdication when our society needed them most was most total, the intellectuals. He knows better or he is mentally ill. He just plain lies. There is one thing I have learned about all of this: plain people like plain talk. Yesterday I did an hour by phone on the Jerry Williams Show on WBBM, Chicago (my second phone appearance. I'm to be live 12/13). The first five women to phone in began with raves about me on this show, which I thus know was shown in Chicago where Metromedia has no station. Not one objected to my calling him a liar. Also, when a man is called a liar and takes it he is destroyed, to himself and his audience. Cohen has been totally silent since that taping session. I fear you are right in saying it is undignified. But I cannot help it when things warm up. I must try, somehow. You are, of course, quite right. I also must try not to personalize such creatures as Cohen as the embodiment of the evil we face. And I will.

Normally I cannot move around very much because I cannot pay for it. But I've been invited to address the student body of the University of Wisconsin, have a seminar and a bull session after a dinner meeting. This puts me in Madison at their expense the 12th. I'll fly back to Chicago for a debate that will not come off with Merriman Smith, who is afraid to debate me before the National Press Club as I challenged after his article appeared. So, I'll have three hours of radio and I'll read Merriman Smith Pulitzer Prize winner against Merriman Smith, ax man. Then I'm to go to California where several groups have invited me to speak. What they are lining up I do not know. These are people I've never met. We've corresponded and talked by phone. I know there is some kind of meeting in San Fransisco the 16th I share with Keating of Ramparts, an address to some group at San Fransisco State College, and then I'll go to Los Angeles for radio, TV and probably public appearances. The fee from the University will probably pay the expenses of retracing my steps to Chicago and the extra hotel bill and the slight duplication of payment for travel expense from home to both Madison and San Fransisco will probably pay the extra cost of flying to Los Angeles. I expect the California peop,e to arrange for quarters. This will be my first speaking trip. I'm looking forward to LA and hope that Liebeler will debate me there, on TV. I'm ready, as you will know when you see my new book.

The NCR paper was a real help. We had perhaps a third of it typed by the time that arrived. I borrowed a Thermofax (mine is broken and I cannot afford its repair and it isn't worth it anyway) and copied those pages. Also, this gives my wife the third copy she is using for indexing, about a third done now, too. I think the index she did for WHITEWASH is infinitely superior to those in the other books rated as professional.

There are some things I should attend to in New York. I have an invitation to a social literary function the 30th that I'd like to make, Perhaps I can do this and we can get together then.

Thanks for taking the time to write, for the encouragement, and for the very good advice that I must find some way of taking.

Sincerely,

P.S. Just heard by phone that the next NEW program is tentatively scheduled for taping on the 6th and I'm invited.